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San Antonio/Bexar County Community Partners Announce Joint Housing Surge Initiative to House 500 People Experiencing Homelessness by December 31, 2021

SAN ANTONIO (*Revised* August 17, 2021) – The City of San Antonio Department of Human Services and the South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH) announce the launch of a collaborative housing surge initiative to address homelessness in the community. A housing surge is a concentrated community effort to house a large number of people in a short time frame. The goal is to house at least 500 people in San Antonio/Bexar County from August 1 to December 31, 2021.

The timing of this housing surge push is critical, with the impending end of the federal eviction moratorium and so many residents in need of assistance.

"The last year and a half has been a challenging time for our community. Many people lost their source of income and, in some cases, their homes," said Katie Vela, Executive Director of SARAH. "However, we currently have unprecedented resources available to house people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. We don't want a single person in need to miss out on a housing opportunity."

Melody Woosley, Director, City of San Antonio Department of Human Services, said, "This community effort to house people currently experiencing homelessness takes place at a scale without precedent in San Antonio. By combining Federal resources with our local know-how and dedication, we will make a difference for hundreds of people. I commend SARAH and our partner agencies for taking on the challenge. This housing surge is a product of the Community Homeless Strategic Plan and the City's COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Plan, outlining our responses to the twin challenges of homelessness and the pandemic."

From January 1 to July 31, 2021, 503 San Antonio/Bexar County residents experiencing homelessness have been placed in permanent housing, around 72 placements per month. To achieve our housing surge goal, the partners will work to increase the housing placement rate by almost 40%. Our community plans to increase available housing opportunities through leveraging funding and housing vouchers provided by the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) and Rapid Rehousing dollars through the Emergency Solutions Grants – CARES Act (ESG-CV). In addition, partner agencies have collaborated to streamline procedures and create mechanisms that break through common delays in rehousing. Finally, SARAH's Housing Strategies Workgroup has worked to build lasting partnerships with landlords and housing providers to identify available openings and support the efficient connection to housing throughout the surge period and beyond.

Official housing surge partners include SARA, City of San Antonio Department of Human Services, Bexar County Economic & Community Development, Housing Authority of Bexar County, San Antonio Housing Authority, Haven for Hope, SAMMinistries, Centro San Antonio, American GI-Forum NVOP, Roy Maas Youth Alternatives, San Antonio AIDS Foundation, Thrive Youth Center, The Salvation Army, The Center for Health Care Services, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities, Christian Assistance Ministry, SA Hope Center, BEAT AIDS, Housing First Community Coalition, The Strong Foundation, My City is My Home, The University of Texas at San Antonio, and ICF International (HUD technical assistance provider).

Community members wanting to get involved in the Housing Surge are encouraged to learn about the available resources, encourage landlords to welcome nonprofit housing programs, and donate to participating organizations. They can also help spread the word online by using the hashtags **#HousingSurgeSA**, **#House500in5Months**, and **#500HousedbyNYE**.

For a branding kit, contact Billy Mahone, Director of Community Engagement of SARA, at billymahone@sarahomeless.org. To learn more about the Housing Surge and track its progress, subscribe to SARA's newsletter or visit sarahomeless.org/housing. The dashboard will be updated weekly on Mondays.

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San Antonio is a global city with a dynamic economy and workforce, a deep cultural heritage and diverse communities that are resilient and welcoming. It is one of the strongest fiscally managed cities in the country, nurturing entrepreneurship, encouraging investment and funding infrastructure. America's seventh-largest city offers a vibrant business climate and growth opportunities in bioscience, financial services, aerospace, cybersecurity, energy, transportation, manufacturing, and healthcare. In 2015, UNESCO designated San Antonio's 18th century Spanish colonial missions as a World Heritage Site – the first in Texas. Proudly called Military City, USA®, San Antonio is home to one of the largest populations of active-duty military, veterans, and crucial military commands. For more information, visit www.sanantonio.gov.

About SARA

SARA is the lead Continuum of Care (CoC) agency for San Antonio and Bexar County. As the CoC, SARA secures and distributes funding for direct service providers in the housing and homeless community and provides guidance to strengthen policies and programs. SARA is responsible for collaborating with, listening to, and collecting data from the housing and homeless community to ensure everyone has a place to call home.